

The Home Reading Circle



CASH DEAL WITH Wong-Lee.

By Charles B. Lewis.

PART I.

The American brig "Huntress," of which I was first mate, had been sold to an English trading firm in the port of Saigon, Cochinchina, and I was out of a berth, as was the case with ten or twelve able seamen who had formed her crew. We were still in a group on the wharf, taking a last look at the bony craft, when a man whom anybody could have recognized as a sea captain, came briskly along and halted to say:

"I heard of this crew only an hour ago, and I'm ready to sign you all on." "For what sort of run?" I asked. "We'll settle that later on. Let the men go to a boarding house, and you come with me. Now, boys, I've got a voyage which will pay you big wages, but it's no place to talk here. The mate will give you particulars this afternoon. Keep mum and don't get drunk. Away you go. Now, then, Mr. Medwin, I said.

"Well, Mr. Medwin, come along and hear what I have to say. An hour ago I would have sold out for a dollar; now I'm feeling ready for anything. What are your men?"

"All Americans." "That's good! My name is Raynor—Captain John Raynor—and I'm a Yankee myself, though I've been out in this cursed country till I'm half-heathen. Gad, sir, but I was in luck to come across you; I never wanted a crew of good men so bad in my life. This is the place—walk in."

He led the way into an office in one end of a big warehouse. A small screw steamer was moored at the wharf opposite the door, and further up the slip was a small bark. On the warehouse was a sign bearing the name of "Perkins & Gage," and I knew the firm to be Americans who did a large business in Chinese products. Captain Raynor handed down a box of cigars and a bottle of wine, flung his hat on the floor and hung up his coat, and when his clear was alight, he humbly queried:

"You know where Sarawak is, mebbe?"

"Yes—in Borneo." "Correct, but for the last three days I've been wishing it was in the other place. The firms of Perkins & Gage and Brown & Phillips want to establish branches at Sarawak, and each is to forward \$25,000 in silver. I'm to have charge of the craft which carries it."

"Well, that's an easy job," I said. "Is it? Just wait a minute. Did you ever hear of Wong-Lee?"

"He's the Chinese pirate." "Just so, and the blindest as well as the cutest devil who ever sailed a junk or cut a white man's throat. That's my trouble—Wong-Lee. He's got spies in every port clear to the end of the Yellow sea, and there's no doubt he stands in with many Chinese officials. He's got the news that this money is going to Sarawak."

"Well, you've got a steamer here to carry it and run away from his old junks."

"That's what I propose to do now, but couldn't think of it before, because I had no crew to depend on. We've got to be devilish sly, however, and the chances are even up that Wong-Lee gets on to our game."

"That afternoon the twelve of us from the 'Huntress' signed on for a voyage to Sarawak and return, with positive orders that no man drink a drop of liquor or open his mouth regarding our port of destination. I was given the berth of chief mate, and accompanied by one of the men, went aboard the bark, which was called the 'Gull.'"

"We may have thrown dust in the eyes of Wong-Lee, or we may have missed it," he explained. "If we happen to encounter him, we don't want these scoundrels against us as well. Three of them would surely knock you down, and we may suspect them of anything."

"While I had been shipping the crew the captain had seen to arming the bark. He had put aboard a dozen cartridges, as many cutlasses, plenty of cut-throats, and the following American shotguns. Even if he encountered any of our sharpshooters, we were not to show ourselves. Counting the cook and steward, who were Malays and hatens of the Chinese, there were fifteen of us in the crew, and we felt we ought to be able to give a fair account of ourselves if laid aboard. The steamer made a run of 120 miles to the north, and then, as planned, she stopped at something went wrong with her machinery. A day was spent in making repairs, and she limped back to Saigon and her crew were discharged. She had seen nothing of Wong-Lee, but there was a good reason for it, as we afterwards ascertained. In spite of all our sharpshooters and secrecy, the pirate's spies got on to our little game and knew that only the boxes of sand went by the steamer. Wong-Lee knew our destination, the course we must take with the prevailing winds, and he was in the wake of the 'Gull' before she had sailed twenty miles. When morning came we had a fine working breeze and crowded the bark along, but there was a junk astern which held her position so steadily that we knew she was something better than a trader. In a run of four hours we did not gain a foot on her, though the 'Gull' would pass the average merchant junk with everything double reefed. Wong-Lee had the fastest native craft afloat, and when noon came and our pursuer still maintained her position, we tried a little experiment in fogging to settle her identity."

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The prisoners' lashing was cast off and they were brought on deck and crowded forward into the bows, and the crew watched them in a furtive mile away from the crew pulled and hauled sulky, and it was perhaps fifteen minutes before they made out the junk astern. There were no less than seven

with wet sand. This was done by employees who could be trusted. After midnight, one night, the money boxes were carried aboard of the 'Gull' and stowed away in the lazarette under the cabin, while the boxes of sand were carried aboard the steamer in broad daylight. On the third day both the steamer and the bark were ready to leave. Both crafts had shipped short-handed crews, and with a purpose in view. We killed time from mid-afternoon till 10 o'clock at night. Then the steamer cast off and headed toward the north. Two hours later Captain Raynor was ready to put to sea. Our men came aboard one by one during the evening and had been smuggled into the cabin. We had on deck six Chinese sailors, not one of whom were able seamen, and they were floundering about and growling at our being short-handed, when the ten Americans walked out of the cabin and there was a change in the programme. It would not do to send these fellows ashore in a boat, and we did not want them undetected. It was therefore decided to imprison them on the ballast. It was a thing we might have to answer for in court later on, but Captain Raynor took the bull by the horns, and it transpired that he never did a more lucky thing.

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She was used for trading along the coast and among the islands, and a faster craft no sailor would care to be aboard of. The other ten men were hidden away until wanted, and the next day we began to sail with a crew for a voyage to Corea and return. This was the first move in this game to blind Wong-Lee. The second was to ship a crew for the steamer and give out that she was bound for Formosa. There was yet a third game to be played. The boxes in which the silver was stored each held \$2,000. Twenty-five extra boxes were made and filled

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THE GREATNESS OF THE UNITED STATES

It is Strongly Emphasized by the Figures Given Below.

UNCLE SAM'S VAST MINERAL WEALTH

Vast Riches That Are Taken from the Ground—The Increase of Gold, Paying Deposits of Ore Exist in Twenty-two States—Silver and Other Metals—An Aggregate Mining Product of Nearly One Billion Dollars' Worth a Year.

New York Commercial Advertiser.

The United States, with a population of fully 67,000,000, ranks as one of the three most powerful and wealthy nations on the surface of the globe. The territory of the United States consists of 3,602,900 square miles; extreme breadth from Quoddy Head in Maine to Cape Flattery, Washington, 2,720 miles; extreme length, from the forty-ninth parallel to the Rio Grande, 1,600 miles. In natural and developed resources the country is growing richer and richer every year, as will be seen by the following condensation of census and concurrent statistics that are being constantly gathered by the government bureaus.

During the last half of the present century the production of gold in the United States has assumed enormous proportions. From 1822 to 1834 the yield of gold from the matrix of the mine and surface deposits has been estimated at \$14,000,000, while from 1834 to 1847 it amounted to \$10,000,000. From 1847 to 1859 the figures rose to \$181,262,050, and the estimate for the past seven years is \$215,357,000. This shows that \$254,159,000 have been extracted from the bowels of the earth, with a continual yearly capacity of over \$30,000,000. Statisticians claim that fully \$300,000,000 of gold has escaped enumeration, so that this country has produced \$2,100,000,000 in gold during the last fifty years.

EXPENSIVE GOLD FIELDS.

Gold is found in remunerative deposits in Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Georgia, Idaho, Michigan, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington and Wyoming. California has led the list, except in 1877, when Nevada produced \$18,000,000. There are today 100,000 gold and silver mining "claims" or locations, but not more than 5,000 are in steady and successful operation. These mines afford employment to 57,307 persons, at the rate of \$29 per individual, and the value of the mining plants is estimated at \$465,960,566. The average annual production of silver, 1,859,104 fine ounces, value \$3,918,172; of silver, 56,452,025 fine ounces, totaling value \$72,888,370 making a total yearly value for both metals of \$107,906,543.

Colorado and Nevada are the principal silver producing states. During the thirteen years from 1877 to 1890 inclusive Colorado produced \$135,182,691, while Nevada's output during the same period was \$131,402,791. The grand total for all the silver states during these thirteen years was \$359,953,232. In 1890 the output of silver in Colorado was \$158,000,000, which this country gave \$75,000,000, or within a fraction of one-half the whole product. Australasia ranks next to the United States for gold and Mexico for silver.

OUR IRON ORES.

Iron ores are found in Michigan, Alabama, Pennsylvania, New York, Minnesota, Virginia, Tennessee, New Jersey, Georgia, Colorado, Missouri, Ohio, Kentucky, Texas, Massachusetts, New Mexico, Maryland, Connecticut, West Virginia, North Carolina, Montana, Utah, Oregon, Idaho, and Idaho, their relative importance being as named. In 1891 Michigan produced 1,127,000 long tons of red and brown hematite and magnetite ores, Alabama gave 1,358,530 tons of hematite, and Pennsylvania 1,274,825 tons. In the same year New Mexico mined 1,017,416 tons of hematite, magnetite and carboniferous ores. The output of these four states was 4,676,791 tons, that of the remaining twenty-one states being 3,978,203 tons, or a total for all of 14,591,178 tons, valued at \$32,351,978, an average of \$2.20 per ton. In 1890 the aggregate value of pig iron manufactured was \$59,315,690, rising in 1892 to \$131,161,023.

The average value of iron ore by states is as follows: Alabama, \$1,457,314; Colorado, \$469,546; Pennsylvania, \$378,888; Delaware and Maryland, \$54,469; Georgia and North Carolina, \$317,372; Idaho and Montana, \$140,647; Kentucky, \$133,885; Michigan, \$158,329; Minnesota, \$2,464,419; Missouri, \$179,477; New Jersey, \$1,352,509; New Mexico and Utah, \$69,956; New York, \$3,028,676; Ohio, \$415,148; Oregon and Washington, \$40,339; Pennsylvania, \$3,945,100; Tennessee, \$629,454; Virginia, \$17,257; Texas, \$16,129; West Virginia, \$291,346.

In 1890 Pennsylvania ranked first among the iron producing states and held that position until 1889, when it was assumed by Michigan. In 1890 Alabama was eighteenth in importance, but has climbed steadily upward until she is now second. The total value of the iron mines, lands, buildings and machinery is placed at \$109,766,199. This description of mining gives employment to 57,700 persons, who receive \$15,458,118, an average of \$269.96 per annum. The average cost of production in all the states is \$24,781,658, equal to \$1.71 per ton. As an iron producer the United States ranks equal with Great Britain, the balance in favor of the latter being only 28,000 tons.

COPPER AND OTHER METALS.

Copper is found in Arizona, Michigan, Montana, New Mexico, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, Utah, California, Wyoming, Vermont and a few of the southern states, their relative importance being as named. The total copper product in 1891 was 295,810,076 pounds; value, \$38,465,300; cost of mining, \$15,082,150, there being 8,721 persons employed above and below ground. Lead mining is divided principally into two groups, the Rocky mountain and the Mississippi valley sections. The first includes Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, South Dakota and Utah; their annual average production being 287,986,600 pounds, valued at \$4,712,757.77. The Mississippi valley section comprises Kansas, Missouri and Wisconsin, with an annual average production of 99,553,083 pounds, valued at \$2,643,469.99. The Rocky mountain region produces annually 287,986,600 pounds

THE GREATNESS OF THE UNITED STATES

It is Strongly Emphasized by the Figures Given Below.

UNCLE SAM'S VAST MINERAL WEALTH

Vast Riches That Are Taken from the Ground—The Increase of Gold, Paying Deposits of Ore Exist in Twenty-two States—Silver and Other Metals—An Aggregate Mining Product of Nearly One Billion Dollars' Worth a Year.

New York Commercial Advertiser.

The United States, with a population of fully 67,000,000, ranks as one of the three most powerful and wealthy nations on the surface of the globe. The territory of the United States consists of 3,602,900 square miles; extreme breadth from Quoddy Head in Maine to Cape Flattery, Washington, 2,720 miles; extreme length, from the forty-ninth parallel to the Rio Grande, 1,600 miles. In natural and developed resources the country is growing richer and richer every year, as will be seen by the following condensation of census and concurrent statistics that are being constantly gathered by the government bureaus.

During the last half of the present century the production of gold in the United States has assumed enormous proportions. From 1822 to 1834 the yield of gold from the matrix of the mine and surface deposits has been estimated at \$14,000,000, while from 1834 to 1847 it amounted to \$10,000,000. From 1847 to 1859 the figures rose to \$181,262,050, and the estimate for the past seven years is \$215,357,000. This shows that \$254,159,000 have been extracted from the bowels of the earth, with a continual yearly capacity of over \$30,000,000. Statisticians claim that fully \$300,000,000 of gold has escaped enumeration, so that this country has produced \$2,100,000,000 in gold during the last fifty years.

EXPENSIVE GOLD FIELDS.

Gold is found in remunerative deposits in Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Georgia, Idaho, Michigan, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington and Wyoming. California has led the list, except in 1877, when Nevada produced \$18,000,000. There are today 100,000 gold and silver mining "claims" or locations, but not more than 5,000 are in steady and successful operation. These mines afford employment to 57,307 persons, at the rate of \$29 per individual, and the value of the mining plants is estimated at \$465,960,566. The average annual production of silver, 1,859,104 fine ounces, value \$3,918,172; of silver, 56,452,025 fine ounces, totaling value \$72,888,370 making a total yearly value for both metals of \$107,906,543.

Colorado and Nevada are the principal silver producing states. During the thirteen years from 1877 to 1890 inclusive Colorado produced \$135,182,691, while Nevada's output during the same period was \$131,402,791. The grand total for all the silver states during these thirteen years was \$359,953,232. In 1890 the output of silver in Colorado was \$158,000,000, which this country gave \$75,000,000, or within a fraction of one-half the whole product. Australasia ranks next to the United States for gold and Mexico for silver.